OVERVIEW 1

Management Board of Cabinet

OPS Management Series

Ontario's Management Philosophy

Introduction

This first publication in a series on management in the Ontario Government states the province's management philosophy. The philosophy outlines government's expectation of management in the open environment of the 80s and is founded on past management successes. The beliefs and principles which follow have been adopted to help ensure that a management process of the highest standard exists throughout the Ontario Government.

In the late 60s and early 70s, government managers learned to manage in a climate of growth. By the mid and late 70s, it became important to hold the line, increase productivity, foster public self-sufficiency and transfer responsibility back to the private sector.

Along with increasing complexity, this decade brings fresh demands for public access to information and services while the demand for reduction in the size and cost of government continues. Today's thrust of 'more with less' challenges management to be creative in a time of restraint and increasing public scrutiny.

The openness and trust which stem from shared beliefs are essential to meet successfully present and future challenges in serving the people of Ontario. This philosophy outlines those beliefs.

The government is committed to making any changes in current management roles, processes and policies necessary to implement the philosophy.

Management

The Beliefs

The Government of Ontario believes that the effectiveness of its organization hinges on human resources and management process. The management process channels, in a purposeful manner, the vitality of each individual. It brings people together in goal-oriented teams and creates an efficient network of communication.

People

Serving the public to the best of his or her ability is an essential aspect of every government employee's work. To maintain a high level of service, the government is committed to using the talents, initiative and creativity of each employee. Along with this goes a dedication to fair treatment, growth and development of each individual.

The government believes that achieving one's own personal fulfillment is vital to excellence. It is, therefore, essential that every employee seek such fulfillment within the framework of government goals. Managers should endeavor to create a climate in which both personal and corporate objectives may be accomplished.

At the more senior levels, managers are so valuable to the government as a whole that they are managed as a corporate resource. For this reason, senior executives are trained and developed in a manner that will equip them with the greatest possible breadth of experience and knowledge.

Management Process

The government's underlying belief in the integrity of individuals permits the selection of a management process which focuses on results, accountability and decentralization of decision-making.

Achieving results efficiently is the primary target of every program, project and policy. The development of a process, obtaining approvals and carrying out specific tasks are all essential means to attaining results; care must always be taken to keep them in that perspective.

Government managers must accept that their tasks, decisions and results are assessed by their superiors within the government and by the public they serve.

Internal accountability requires that every manager explain and respond through the normal reporting channels. Public or **external accountability** is through the minister, the legislature, its committees, the media and interested groups. Here the role of a manager is limited to explaining actions or facts. Changes in policy or any other actions to be taken in direct response to public scrutiny are at the complete discretion of the minister.

Decentralization of decision-making is basic to the successful operation of the Ontario Government. The systematic delegation of responsibility and authority to the lowest appropriate level in the organization is essential to involve those employees who are closest to the people served.

Philosophy

The Principles

The Ontario Government uses and accepts many management principles. Of those, the following are essential to uphold the beliefs just stated.

Responding
It is the duty of all government managers to be responsive to government direction, to be guided by legislation, and be sensitive to the needs of the residents of Ontario. As well as accepting and implementing government decisions, managers are responsible for recommending changes to the programs and legislation that would better serve the Ontario public.

Co-operating
It is important that government managers share appropriate information and co-operate with individuals and organizations affected by their decisions. This ensures that corporate, ministry and organizational efforts are consistent and supportive. Many issues are too complex for one person or organization to resolve.

Setting Direction
All managers have a primary responsibility for setting broad or specific direction, consistent with priorities set by higher levels. Managers are equally responsible for communicating this direction to all involved. The planning process is essential to both setting and communicating direction.

Evaluating
All managers are responsible for evaluating individual, program and organizational performance on a regular basis and for ensuring that credible measuring systems are used to do so. These tasks can sometimes prove difficult, but mastering evaluation skills is fundamental to successful management in government.

Motivating
Formal recognition of individual effort provides managers with a basic method of motivating employees to do outstanding work. This technique is time-proven and its practice should be second nature to all government managers.

Developing
Managers are responsible for developing the capabilities and for fostering the personal growth of their employees. This development, combined with team building, can greatly enhance the organization's performance as a unit.

Adapting
Managers must continually adapt to new conditions. It is important, however, that such changes are carefully considered before being implemented, especially where people are involved.

Ontario Government

Ontario

To make this philosophy work, every employee must be familiar with, and accept, the government working environment, its complexity, and the key responsibilities within it.

The Environment

The Government of Ontario is a complex and diverse group of organizations related in two essential ways. Every program serves the public directly or indirectly and, because of Cabinet solidarity, Cabinet assumes a collective responsibility for all corporate and ministry policy decisions.

Since governing is a political process, policy and direction setting are carried out in a political environment with due recognition of the electoral process and the principles of responsible government. To complement these factors, managers are often called upon to provide a longer range perspective.

In addition, the democratic process requires all government actions to be based on legislative authority and direction. Hence the legislature continually monitors and challenges the performance of the government and all managers through questions in the House, reviews of estimates and legislation, the Public Accounts Committee and the Provincial Auditor. This monitoring, combined with open government policies, makes every government manager subject to scrutiny by the general public, the media and interested groups.

There are other key factors which contribute to the attraction and complexity of managing in government. These include the multiplicity of objectives, the costs of measuring program results, the lack of precedents in program design, and the need for stringent financial controls to justify expenses and protect the public's interest. Managing effectively in government is a challenge which requires intelligence, public awareness, trust and good judgement.

Key Responsibilities

This management philosophy has been developed within the context of the following responsibilities.

The government has the overall responsibility for choosing the best mix of programs, policies and resources to meet the changing needs of the Ontario public. It also has the final responsibility for ensuring that the Ontario Public Service successfully designs and delivers the programs to the public.

The Ontario Public Service has the responsibility to design and deliver programs which provide maximum benefit to the public within the allocated resources, the legislation and the administrative rules of government. It also must provide the highest quality of input to the decision-making processes of Cabinet and its ministries.

To help carry out these responsibilities, the ministry system is designed to be a key focal point for decision-making below the Cabinet level. In carrying out its mandate, each ministry has substantial flexibility in decision-making within the framework of the government's corporate management policies.

Because of the diversity and decentralization of government, central agencies and Cabinet committees have key roles to play in the areas of co-ordinating, monitoring, setting management policies, and advising Cabinet on matters of corporate interest. The corporate management processes are the vehicles through which these agencies and committees communicate with Cabinet on the one hand, and with ministries on the other.

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